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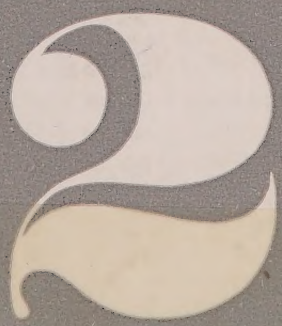

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The Department on
Church and Society
Division of Studies
World Council of Churches

In 1954 the direction of the World Council's program of study on social questions took a decisive new turn when the Second Assembly of the Council proposed that attention be concentrated on the social problems confronting peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America. After careful study and consultation a plan of action for an ecumenical study project on "The Common Christian Responsibility Toward Areas of Rapid Social Change" was prepared by the Working Committee of the Department on Church and Society and forwarded to the World Council's Central Committee which gave its approval.

A brief report indicating the purpose and scope of the new study was published in September 1955 and aroused wide interest with the result that an extensive program of inquiry and discussion of the Christian strategy in relation to issues of rapid social change has been launched in these areas and also in the churches of the West. The Working Committee on Church and Society at its meeting this summer (July 1956) at Herrenalb in Western Germany has reviewed the organization of the new study and, on the basis of reactions to its first report, has prepared this second report which in greater detail explores the issues and suggests those that need particular attention.

The Committee is pleased to present this second report to the Churches and to those Christian groups interested in this ecumenical program. It especially welcomes comments and suggestions on its views.

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October — 1956

ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE IN ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

I. Introduction

Last year at its meeting in Davos, Switzerland, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches launched a study on *The Common Christian Responsibility Toward Areas of Rapid Social Change.* A pamphlet outlining the purpose and scope of the study and indicating the main issues for the inquiry in Asia, Africa and Latin America was published by the Department on Church and Society.

The response of the churches in these countries as well as in the West has been beyond expectation. There is obviously a widespread concern in churches all over the world that the common responsibility of the whole Church toward these areas be clarified in thought and expressed in action. A truly world-wide discussion of the crucial issues of social change has begun in earnest. It has been the task of the Working Committee for the Department on Church and Society at its meeting in Herrenalb, Western Germany, to review the development of this inquiry during the past year and to formulate the plan of advance for the next two years. This has involved an examination of the basic assumptions of the study, a more definitive elaboration of the central issues, and the working out of the strategy. This report sets forth our findings.

The World-wide Dimensions of Social Change

The social problems arising from the fundamental changes in Asian, African and Latin American societies have been the main subjects of our study and they remain the principal concern. However, the experience of the past year has led us to a new awareness of the world-wide dimensions of social change and its effects upon our approach in this project.

In the first place, all social systems in all parts of the world are in flux and all are being tested. Secondly, there is a continuous interaction between the changes taking place in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and those occurring in Western countries. For example, the impact of automation and the development of nuclear power is felt everywhere and may set in motion a world-wide revolution both in attitudes and techniques. On the other hand, forces such as the new nationalism in Asia and Africa affect the patterns of, and the thinking about, political and economic organization in the West. In view of these factors, the Christian concern with social change must be seen as a unity. The interdependence and solidarity of humanity has never been more evident than at present, and for this reason the ecumenical conversation on social questions has never been more significant.

Foundations of Christian Concern

The Church is not a spectator of these social changes. It is inevitably deeply involved because it must work for "responsible emancipation". But change carries with it creative as well as destructive possibilities, and the churches and individual Christians are required to become conscious of their calling to demonstrate in thought and action the Christian concern that these changes shall enhance and not destroy the dignity of man in society. They are required to think anew about the role of the Church in society.

Judging from the reactions of many churches, there is uncertainty about the nature of this responsibility of the Church toward society and also some confusion as to the role of the Church in coping with the intricate problems that arise in situations where traditional patterns and structures are breaking down. The complex technical questions associated with the task of building new societies make it difficult to discover the relevance of the Christian faith for social action. There is

also the fear of entering into controversial economic, social and political issues, and of coming into conflict with militant ideologies and religions which often have great dynamic power. There is in this situation a need for rediscovering the Christian basis for social action and for rethinking the Christian meaning of responsible living in society.

There has been in recent years a growing ecumenical consensus regarding the biblical foundations of Christian social concern which may be offered as the basis for discussion in the churches. This consensus may be formulated as follows :

— God in becoming man in Christ has identified Himself with all mankind. This means that all people and all human groups share a common human dignity. The Christian's behaviour as a member of society is judged by his relation to God's ultimate purpose for all His children. Each Christian is therefore called by God to be a witness to what He is doing in and for the world.

— God's revelation of Himself in the crucified and risen Christ shows that He is Lord of this world as well as of the Church. God in His mercy uses us to accomplish His redemptive purpose. This means that the Church in which Christ is continually present does not exist for itself but for the world, and in its life as a community and in its witness and action in the world, it must express Christ's ministry of healing and reconciliation for all men.

— God's love for His creatures requires us to seek justice and the well-being of all men. The Christian must work in the world and among and with men as they are, with the knowledge of his own dependence on divine mercy and of the sin and finiteness of all things human. This means that God calls us to act in society, making use of economic and political structures and movements which are available instead of waiting until there is an ideal situation. The certainty of His victory frees us from illusions and false hopes, and at the same time guarantees that in whatever circumstances we find ourselves our efforts will have significance in God's ongoing purposes for society.

— Man is a unity of body and spirit, and his true nature is realized in society. The life of the person is deeply influenced by his material environment and by his membership in the community. The Church and the Christian must be

concerned about any threat to the welfare and dignity of persons arising from particular economic, social and political situations.

— The Christian truth known to us through the Bible becomes a means of deliverance from the absolutizing tendency of all ideologies. The danger of developing a Christian "ideology" based on biblical texts taken out of context is often very real and will be avoided where the Bible is interpreted in the light of God's disclosure of Himself in Christ. The big problem for Christians in a time of such great change may be to avoid a "Christian" social ideology, that is, expressing in a too definite and universal way what is the meaning of Christian justice and freedom.

The Scope of this Report

This report deals with the issues of social change in Asia, Africa and Latin America in an attempt to clarify the social implications of these biblical truths and to relate them to concrete situations.

The compulsion toward Christian action in social, cultural and political fields, derived from the Gospel, does not mean that Christians have ready answers for the multitude of problems in human society. They will use with gratitude the insights of secular or non-Christian groups and cooperate with them wherever circumstances permit. At the same time they should be aware that there exist in our days several highly dynamic world systems of an anti-Christian character, as well as ideologies and legal systems wh ch compete with the Gospel in an attempt to have a firm grip on people and their societies.

The Committee is fully aware of the inadequacy of its attempt to formulate the issues which confront churches and Christians in different national and regional situations. The report is, therefore, only a tentative statement, and is offered for the discussion and guidance of groups already engaged in the study program in different parts of the world, and to others who wish to share in this endeavour.

II. Impact of the West and International Cooperation

Three concerns are reflected here : the need for a correct understanding of the historical involvement of the West in the factors producing rapid social change in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and of the responsibilities which flow from it ; the need for identification of the nature and urgency of the tasks in economic and social development which call for international cooperation and assistance ; and the need for a clearer grasp of the responsibilities of the churches in East and West in relation to these tasks. Further ecumenical study and discussion may concentrate on the following problems.

Modern Nationalism and International Cooperation

Modern nationalism, with its emphasis on the nation-state, stems in large part from the development of European political thought and action since the 18th century. It is a relatively recent phenomenon in Asia and Africa, and has grown through the transfer of Western concepts, the impress of Western administration, and also as a reaction to Western dominance and exploitation. The demand for self-determination in non-self-governing territories, the rapid proliferation of new states, and the urge for national autonomy in the economic and social spheres, reflect a major dynamic of our times.

Over against all this stands the fact of the growing interdependence of peoples in regard to economic life and security. Many of the older as well as newer states no longer have in themselves viable economies or military security. The hope for prosperity and security rests in the building of larger communities transcending, though not obliterating, national lines. The expectation of many of the countries critically involved in rapid social change that a solution to their problems can be found along strictly national lines goes contrary to the facts and trends of contemporary international life.

This contrad ction between national demands and expectations and the hard facts of interdependence poses genuine problems for international cooperation and assistance. It is futile to say to those denied self-government or independence, or those who have recently attained autonomy, that nationalism is "out of date". Only a free nation can sacrifice or delegate

part of its sovereignty to a larger community. Planning for economic and social development in the present ferment must be primarily national in character. On the other hand, international assistance, to be responsible, must weigh such plans against the criteria of effectiveness and the realities of interdependence. Obviously, both national plans and international assistance need to be worked out in mutual consultation, the procedures for which need to be determined.

What tasks does this problem present to the churches and Christian citizens ? What can Christians in the West do to help eliminate elements of paternalism in assistance programs, and to foster a more genuine understanding of, and respect for, local needs and claims ? What does this mean for Christians going into overseas service ? What can Christians in countries of rapid social change do to help bring recognition of the necessary limits of nationalism, and the needs and claims of larger communities ?

Racial and Ethnic Tensions

Racial and ethnic tensions in countries undergoing rapid social change, while often having indigenous roots, have undoubtedly been accentuated by Western policies and practices at home and abroad. Artificial boundaries have brought ethnic groups into conflict. Policies of "divide and rule" have played upon racial and religious differences. Discrimination and segregation have brought about bitter resentments. In some countries the settling of foreign and non-indigenous ethnic groups has produced special strains.

The dangers involved in racial and ethnic tensions do not mean that such differences, even tensions, are necessarily evil. The homogeneous nation-state has its liabilities as well as assets. The multi-national or multi-racial society has creative possibilities as a testing ground of cooperation and community. The need is to build, as Christians are doing in some countries, a common loyalty and ethos as a foundation for justice, tolerance and cooperation.

While Christians all over the world have a common concern for study and action in relation to this problem, few generalized answers seem relevant here, because situations vary so widely. In each specific situation where racial or ethnic tensions threaten to produce, or actually do provoke, conflict, Christians need to examine their own practices and witness in the light of the

teaching of the Gospel regarding human personality and of the needs for a cooperative society.

What, then, is the responsibility of Christians toward racial and ethnic tensions in their own country, taking also into account the effect on Christian witness in other countries ? What is the spiritual and moral responsibility of Christians of one country with reference to racial and ethnic discriminations in another from the standpoint of Christian solidarity throughout the world ? What are Western countries doing about the immigration of ethnic and racial groups into their lands ? What is the Christian's responsibility at this point ? What are the repercussions of racially restrictive immigration laws on the relations between the "West" and areas of rapid social change ?

Social Disorganization and Religious Resurgence

An important consequence of the impact of the West on Asia, Africa and Latin America has been the breakdown of ancient cultural and social patterns and controls. Some of these were static and enfeebled, unable to cope with social change, while some which had a social relevance disintegrated under the impact of Western patterns. Neither the old values nor those of the West have been able to fill the vacuum left by the breakdown of the ancient patterns. However, in some cases these have been unduly hardened, especially in the great migration process induced by the impact of the West during recent centuries.

Perhaps the main claimant for dominance in this situation of flux is a vigorous nationalism, too new to have deep roots and too unstable and exclusive to provide adequate social cohesion. Associated with the growth of nationalism has been the resurgence of older religions, in some cases stimulated and exploited for political and cultural purposes, but in others constituting a genuine revival of an interrupted faith and ethos. Whether such revivals can actually cope with the severe challenges of rapidly changing social situations is a moot question. But Christians need to study such religious resurgence seriously and critically, and help in finding ways of meeting the desperate cultural and religious needs to which such revivals are an attempted response. It is at this point that the study of rapid social change needs to follow carefully the study of a Christian approach to the non-Christian religions.

There is a widespread desire, especially among young people, to accept modern Western ways of life in an indiscriminate way. The West has a serious responsibility for the introduction of dangerous products (alcohol) and the quality of films and other means of mass communication exported to Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Problems of Population and Family Planning

The rapid increase of population, despite wide variations as between regions, is a world-wide phenomenon. Various factors, such as improvements in agriculture and industrialization, play a part, but a major factor is undoubtedly the development of modern medicine which has brought about dramatic reductions in death rates in recent decades. It is this factor which is producing drastic economic and social consequences in Asia, Africa and Latin America, for improvements in public health stand in the forefront of Western impact on these societies. Many of the lands of rapid social change confront the prospect of a doubling of their population in a generation.

This revolution in their demographic situation places quickly mounting strains upon inadequate or inadequately developed means of subsistence. Improvements in health can also mean a release of new manpower for the development of resources. But where societies are densely populated to begin with, a vigorous, balanced and effective development becomes a life-and-death matter. Only a wise and courageous combination of agricultural and industrial development, of education and voluntary family planning, offers any hope of restoring a tolerable balance between population and means of subsistence. Also, the needs of densely populated countries, such as India, Indonesia and Egypt, for international assistance carry great urgency, since, unlike many of the less densely populated countries, time for a successful solution is rapidly running out.

More serious ecumenical study of the problem of population, and the related question of family planning or birth control, is needed. What needs to be said, from a Christian perspective, about the importance of the quality of family life ? What are the implications in regard to family planning ? What is the meaning of responsible citizenship in this connection ? What needs to be said about the importance of welfare schemes as an alternative to the traditional methods of old-age security provided by large families ?

International Trade and Stabilization of Prices

One of the major economic impacts of the West on the continents under study has been the introduction of a money economy and development of international trade. Through the plantation system and mining schemes, certain agricultural and mineral products of importance for Western and world markets were given priority of consideration, without any adequate regard for the general economic needs of the producers. Thus many of the economically underdeveloped countries have become financially dependent upon one or two, or at most a few, raw materials subject to wide fluctuations and even manipulations in regard to prices.

It is, of course, true that most of these countries must find in the sale of raw materials a major means for securing capital for modernizing their economy. But the slender and inadequate basis of their international trade, complicated by erratic fluctuations in world prices for raw materials, is a grave obstacle to development. While the technical aspects of corrective measures, as international price agreements on basic primary commodities, long-term sales contracts or local marketing boards, lie outside the field of this study, their need for them unquestionably requires attention.

International Investment and Assistance

Raw materials from the economically less developed countries have aided, and continue to aid, the more industrialized countries in their own economic development. What assistance is going in the reverse direction is quite inadequate. Investment is largely concentrated in the production of raw materials needed by industrialized economies. Year by year, the gap in production and in standards of living is increasing instead of narrowing.

The economically less developed countries confront not only the difficulties of extracting capital from populations on the margin of subsistence, but also the handicaps of competing with highly industrialized countries in the world market. It is clear that, if the process of economic development is not to have tragic results, substantial assistance, both technical and financial, must be forthcoming from the West. During the past decade, a good beginning has been made in regard to technical assistance through mult lateral and bilateral schemes. But in regard to financial assistance, particularly grants to help

build the essential infra-structure of economic development (roads, schools, harbours and the like), nothing has been done commensurate either with the needs of the less developed countries or with the available resources of those more developed.

In this situation, what are the responsibilities of Christians in the West to develop a public conscience on more adequate assistance, as a matter of social justice, of humanitarian concern and of national self-interest ? What are the responsibilities of Christian institutions in underdeveloped countries to maximize the effect of technical and other assistance rendered by international agencies ?

Development within a Responsible Social Framework

One of the more promising contributions of the West to the lands of rapid social change is the conception of a democratic or free society as a social and political goal. It is important that this goal is proclaimed, even though these lands may lack experience in modern democracy and to a large extent the religious and cultural ethos which undergirds it in the West. There are, of course, wide variations in these respects.

The hopeful beginnings toward a free and responsible society are jeopardized particularly in the most critically situated countries by the stark alternatives presently posed by the challenge of economic and social development. The demand for quick improvements in standards of living confronts the need for a severe belt-tightening to produce capital for development. The question is whether (short of very substantial assistance from the West) the additional hardships required for economic development can be imposed by a free society. This question poses quite different issues for Christians in the lands of rapid social change and those in the West.

One of the important results of the impact of the West is to introduce a new understanding of the meaning of cooperation of men and women and their respective status in social and political life. This Western pattern often conflicts with the mores of these countries. One of the significant contributions Christians can make in this s tuation is to develop a clear and positive witness regarding such matters as the participation of women in political life. In this context the Church must seriously examine the necessity for educating women to prepare them for their new role in society.

The Christian mission has been and remains an important element in the impact of the West on the three continents. The spread of the Gospel and establishment of the Church in all countries has important social and cultural, as well as religious, significance. The extension of technical and social services, particularly through mission schools and hospitals, should also be mentioned. In its impact on indigenous cultures, the Christian mission has had a liberating, as well as disintegrating, effect. The missionary movement has been the carrier of both the Christian heritage and Western concepts partly rooted in it.

But it is the Gospel that is everywhere a liberating force. Church patterns and practices have been variously an aid and an obstacle to the release of its influence. Too often they have inadvertently entangled the Good News in peculiarly Western forms which have stood in the way of recognition of its universal character, and of the development of indigenous forms which would help to communicate it. The training of indigenous leaders and the development of self-support have been much too slow. Too little has been done to explore and discover new avenues of Christian service. With the wearing out of Western political dominance, these handicaps have been underscored. The issue is how quickly the essentials of the Christian faith and witness can be disentangled from some of their Western garments and clothed in their appropriate native garb.

In this respect Christians both in the West and in the areas of rapid social change are called upon to re-evaluate the effect of missions over the years upon the life of the peoples in those areas. An important element in the disentanglement of the Gospel from Western ecclesiasticism is the necessity on the part of the Western churches in their missionary activity to rise above an attitude of "proprietorship". One of our particular problems is how to make non-Christians realize that Christian missions are not an imposition from outside but a practical manifestation of international goodwill and sharing with others of the Light and Life which we have come to find in Jesus Christ. These problems compel the Christians in the West to re-evaluate all phases of their mission program, and at the same time to take more seriously the opportunity which the missionary movement still offers to contribute toward the solution of many problems facing people in areas undergoing rapid social change.

III. Social Change in Rural Communities

All parts of the world are reacting in various ways and in varying degrees to the forces of rapid social change, but in recent years, these forces have had a most vivid impact on the remotest rural areas in Asia and Africa. The most obvious changes are in economic, social and political fields, but further observation makes clear the profound effect of such changes on the spiritual and cultural life of rural peoples. Rural communities are more hard hit than others by this experience as they tend to depend more on intimate relationships between individuals, to rely on homogeneous traditions and customs, and to have inadequate resources to meet their new needs and aspirations.

Economic Developments in Rural Communities

In the life of the new nation-states or those on the threshold of independence the development of an economically sound village life is a question of decisive importance. Without such development there will be an increasing division and tension between two sections of society : a lower stratum living in the villages and an upper stratum in the cities, with the latter living at the expense of the former. Moreover, the static decay of the villages and the pauperization which is already beginning to appear, are among the causes of the migration into the cities, more particularly amongst Christians.

The economic forces at work in village and rural communities reveal the dimensions of the social changes taking place :

— the growing use of money and credit in economic relations brings with it more impersonal relations between people and upsets the old standards of values in rural life ;

— the technical improvements in agriculture, including large-scale developments such as irrigation, result in a new technical approach to land utilization ;

— changes in land tenure and programs of land redistribution bring vast changes in many other rural economic institutions ;

— expansion of roads and other means of communication brings the rural areas closer to the towns and cities and exposes them to new social and cultural influences.

Such economic and social changes are necessary if the material conditions of rural peoples are to be improved, but with these changes come new problems and dangers. Frequently these are so great that Christians resist change and seek to hold on to the traditional patterns of village life. But attempts to preserve the traditional village system will be futile. What is required is a *properly conceived* change in rural life, bringing villagers out of their isolation in order to develop the forces and possibilities latent within them. The problem of social education is of fundamental importance, if the rural areas are not to disintegrate still further as a result of present economic and social development. Rural people will have to be prepared for these new developments and for the social problems which accompany them. Therefore, Christians have to support wholeheartedly all efforts to strengthen the economic life of the villages through the work of cooperative societies, the fight against usury, the promotion of methods of agriculture suited to the resources and climate of the areas, the regulation of land tenure and the evils of absentee landlordism, accommodation of schools to the real needs of the village, and the discovery of new ways of expressing the human values inherent in traditional village customs and methods.

The Development of Agriculture

Generally speaking, average income is low in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the income of rural groups is low in comparison with that of other sectors of the population. One of the most important means of general development is an improvement of agricultural productivity and income. This is of vital importance also for the life of the rural church.

To increase agricultural production, the state must play a large role in most countries both in direct action and by giving inducements and guidance to private initiative. In most areas of Asia and Africa only the state can ensure the capital necessary for large-scale improvements in cultivation. Only the state can bring about the reforms in the structure of land tenure or in village organization which are necessary to encourage economic progress, and only the state can ensure the setting up of satisfactory agricultural credit facilities and agricultural extension services which must help the rural peoples to economic advance.

The churches and other voluntary groups must help to ensure that these functions of the state will be carried out effectively and under conditions which will help yield the economic and social results aimed at. For this purpose the churches and their members must seek to understand the basic objectives and assumptions of state programs of agricultural development.

Moreover, the greatest obstacle to increased agricultural production may be the attitudes of people to improved techniques, to work, to the local government administration, to the land, or to their neighbour in cooperative enterprise. The Christian witness on these questions needs to be made clear.

Perhaps most important of all are the experiments in village and rural development being made in many areas, particularly in India. These experiments are based on the idea that change can only come in the village community when the villagers want it. By bringing about useful economic and social reforms through collective effort, they not only improve their own conditions, but also create an atmosphere of cooperation and give new meaning to rural life. Christians have a large part to play in such efforts, especially in defining the goals of village development.

The Family and the Status of Women in Rural Life

Changes in rural life have a profound effect especially upon the family and upon women. Even material changes, such as improved water and fuel supplies, better transport and communications, the mechanization of previously manual processes of food production and preparation, the replacement of a subsistence economy by cash stores and shops with a wider range of foods and materials, alter the pattern of family life and of woman's daily round. These changes require the replanning of education, especially of girls, since through material advances they are enabled to attend school regularly and for longer periods. It also means that education must be provided for women so that they can make use of the improved standards of family living.

Industrial development also encourages men in rural areas to leave their homes either daily or for longer periods for the new labour markets. There follows a shift of responsibility from men to women in matters affecting life and discipline in the home as well as in the church and the neighbourhood.

Industrialization and trading sometimes bring employment to rural areas for girls and women. Economic independence then comes within their reach for the first time; the age of marriage and the traditions of dowry and bride-wealth are affected. The total result is a social dislocation that will make heavy demands upon Christians who must share the responsibility of leadership in trying to find new patterns of family life and new relations between men and women.

The Role of the Church

The Church has many opportunities of making its witness in this changing situation. Above all it must point to the need for change, and help its members to see the meaning of responsible action in the search for new methods and patterns of living.

As a world community the Church has a responsibility to bring a wider perspective into the outlook of people living in isolated rural areas and to help Christians to see their local problems in a world setting.

The world Christian community can also provide resources for the local community in the form of Christian fraternal workers with skills and techniques and experience in rural community organization. It can also strengthen and support the local Christian groups in calling attention to the impact of foreign assistance on the village situation and the points at which such assistance can be made more creative.

The Church can perhaps play its most effective role in meeting rapid social change in rural areas through the action of the local congregation. For this purpose the local church will need a larger and better trained pastoral staff. In newer countries where there is a shortage of trained people, the clergy often do not have the educational background and training to provide a leadership adequate to the challenge of the changing scene, with its secular pressures and increasing popular control. The local congregation or parish will need to reorganize its life and rethink its forms of worship and evangelism if it is to provide the needed leadership. It will have to rid itself of patterns inherited from an alien environment, and adapt itself to, and incorporate and develop, indigenous forms of organization, worship and expression; it will need to show the confidence that springs from a willingness to create a new order to meet a new need. The response of the congregation will depend to a very great measure on the leadership qualities of the local clergy.

In saying this we are aware of the danger of generalizations. We therefore select certain situations in which the Church finds itself in relation to the state and society and which create special problems or opportunities in rural areas.

In some parts of the world where Christian congregations find themselves in a minority, the majority are not only ready, but pathetically eager, to accept Christian leadership in adapting themselves to the changing situation.

In other regions, there are Christian minorities in rural districts, where strong nationalism or a dominant majority of another faith makes it difficult to engage in social action, and where it even becomes dangerous to try to influence others. Such a situation may understandably lead these small communities to withdraw into themselves and to try to dissociate themselves from the changing scene. This is surely a case where ecumenical help and influence may bring encouragement and support to these isolated communities and perhaps influence the attitude of political and other religious groups toward them.

There are also areas where Christians are either actually or nominally in the majority, but where they are not necessarily fully aware of either their responsibility or ability to meet and respond to rapid social change.

The Church also confronts particular opportunities and difficulties in those areas where the state has taken the lead in initiating, staffing and pursuing programs that revolutionize rural living. The Church must support governments which are taking responsibility for helping rural areas. A special opportunity for the Church lies in educating its members to understand what is happening and to give full support to, and make full use of, government services. But there are dangers in such a situation, and occasions may arise where private, as opposed to government, action is either forbidden or restricted. Then the Church has the task of defining the limits of state responsibility and defending the place of voluntary agencies in responsible communities.

Another very familiar situation arises where change is initiated from outside the area or even from outside the country, i.e. international technical assistance and economic aid. In these cases, cooperation with the rural community and its willing and informed participation is essential, and leadership

must be found within the community to bring this about. The opportunities for the Church are immense — Christians can be identified with high professional-technical standards (showing that the Christian Church itself has moved very far from the days when goodwill was accepted as a substitute for skill). It can demonstrate the readiness of Christians to identify themselves with the efforts for change and development and their readiness to serve not only their own fellow Christians but the community as a whole. But these opportunities also bring dangers. For example, Christians in their enthusiasm may assume too many duties and responsibilities, and by working for, rather than with, the rural communities may fail to encourage active local leadership without which no responsible change can be effected.

In some situations the initiative comes from the rural community, but technical help is sought from outside experts. Here is a special chance for Christians to go into action and demonstrate that they can provide leadership and also support for community efforts.

Ways and Means by which the Churches Can Play their Part

We cannot offer here an extensive and exhaustive survey of ways and means by which the churches can play a significant part in affecting the course of rapid social change. The following suggestions are based on work already being done by various churches.

1. *New forms of direct Christian service*

It is in the nature of the village situation that the possibility for rapid economic development depends to a large extent on the villagers themselves. Local action cannot replace government programs of economic assistance, but very often government efforts are nullified by the failure to secure local interest and support for programs of development. The Christian community has a great opportunity to encourage local social action. In the past Christian churches and missions have been leaders in local community action especially in the organization of schools, medical work and in introducing improved methods of agriculture. Today there are many new opportunities for direct community service, but Christians must consider the relation of such social service projects to the new political and economic situation of their country, and they must

relate their work to the efforts of government and other voluntary agencies. In this regard churches and missions need to review the forms of Christian social service developed in the past and to prepare themselves to meet new needs. The churches of Asia and Africa can learn much from each other and from the churches in the West concerning useful and effective forms of community service.

2. *Training in needed skills and leadership*

Rural areas often lack an alert leadership and people equipped with skills to cope with the variety of demands which a simpler and often relatively primitive level of living imposes. The task of the Church in such a situation is to provide training for needed skills and leadership, relevant to the special needs of the area. In providing for such training, the Church should encourage the persons so trained to enter not only the church-related agencies but *also* government and private employment in the spirit of Christian service.

In other situations the Church need not establish its own training centre, but should encourage its members to avail themselves of opportunities in centres operated by government or by other non-church agencies.

3. *Education for life*

The purpose of education in relation to society, and the content of that education, has to be thought out again in terms of the new needs of rural areas. The Church must take a close interest in this, both in advising on necessary changes, where it has the relevant experience, and in encouraging its own members to accept them.

It is equally important that the Church should lead the way in giving all its boys and girls the chance of education. This means not only making full use of the elementary schools, but also seeing that able boys and girls take full advantage of further education and training, even if some of them use their new knowledge and skills outside their local communities. The Church, however, should encourage its young people to recognize their primary responsibility to their home area and their duty to apply the benefits of their training to improving life there.

4. *Support of research and inquiry*

There are many problems of interest to the Church where careful research and inquiry are essential to help in deciding the right social policy. These include : the place of women in

society, the provision of opportunities for young people in their home communities, the building of a strong family life, the sound use of soil and natural resources, land-tenure relationships, and forms of economic organization. The Church has a duty to support sound research and honest inquiry on these questions. It also has the duty to analyse the findings of such research and inquiry as they affect its own organization and its own teachings and practices.

5. *Providing an information service*

There is a great need for information on new trends and projects, yet this frequently is not readily available in a practically useful form in rural areas. The Church can help fill this need by :

(a) providing information on local projects and problems ;

(b) adapting existing information so that it is interpreted and recast in a language and format suited to the varying levels of understanding and reading ability in the rural area ;

(c) distributing available materials to those who can use them effectively, including use by the churches of existing centres of information and the establishment of lending libraries ;

(d) sponsoring special projects, conferences, workshops and other means of spreading information, drawing upon ecumenical resources where desirable ;

(e) making use of audio-visual aids of all kinds ;

(f) setting up demonstration projects, centres and exhibits.

Rural peoples react in very different ways to the problems of rapid social change. Whereas some areas accept the challenge wholeheartedly, others, especially where non-Christian faiths are predominant, tend to suspect these impulses as signs of an attempt to impose a Western way of life or as an insidious form of colonialism. Churches should try to see the problems involved here in all their aspects, and should make clear that they are not identified with the economic aims of Western countries and the attitudes of cultural superiority which are often to be found there.

IV. Industrialization and Urbanization

Industrialization

By industrialization we understand general technological development and not simply the growth of large-scale manufacturing. Industrial agriculture, mining, the development of transportation systems and communication networks, etc., are all parts of "industrialization" as we understand it. As we look at problems of industrialization, it is very important to bear in mind the changing character of technology itself. That is to say whatever answers one may find in relation to any aspect of the problem of industrialization must necessarily be tentative and need to be subjected to constant review and re-evaluation.

Industrialization and Balanced Development

Industrialization is inevitable and necessary in almost all areas, but it provides no simple panacea. Account needs to be taken of the differences that exist from one situation to another. For example, the type and scale of industry to be introduced into a given area must necessarily be determined by such factors as : whether the area is overpopulated or underpopulated ; what skills are available ; what are the resources of the area, etc. For example, where there is a surplus of labour, highly mechanized forms of industry are not appropriate, but full use needs to be made of labour-intensive processes.

More specifically, industrialization, if it is to be really helpful to the people of a given area, must be planned as part of a well-rounded, balanced development, and must avoid the mistakes made by the West in the Industrial Revolution. This means that we must look at the problems of that area, not only from the standpoint of the people living therein, but also of the peoples in the areas surrounding it. Christian people should actively participate in such planning and seek to maintain this perspective which transcends the immediate interest of the population in the given area. To make a positive contribution in this respect, Christians must (a) fully understand the economic, technological and sociological factors involved (this requires constant study of the issues related to the growth of industries), and (b) take the necessary political and social action to implement the findings of such studies.

Industry is, from the Christian point of view, a gift from God to the entire world, even as are natural resources. In considering the benefits of industrialization, narrow nationalism or local provincialism must be avoided. In this regard two points are fundamental:

(a) To help each nation or group of nations in any region plan their industries in relation to the needs of the whole world there must be schemes for the balanced development of world trade in the context of a responsible international economic order. Without this, countries will be forced inevitably and rightly to defend their economies by an undue degree of autarchy. In this regard there is an urgent need for international agreements for stabilizing the prices of the basic commodities on which particular countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America depend. All these problems require competent study at the technical level. But Christians throughout the world must undertake the responsibility of presenting the needs of the world both in national and regional planning and in international trade.

(b) Whether industry and resources are privately or publicly owned, the Christian conception of stewardship is involved. Private ownership can never be absolute for Christians, but always involves responsibilities to others. Publicly owned industries also have the obligation to use resources for the common good, which does not necessarily follow from the mere fact of public ownership. (See the *Report of the Oxford Conference* of 1937 on Property, and the following section on *Responsible Citizenship*.)

Of basic importance to economic development is the matter of capital formation. Capital formation requires savings, and there is a tremendous need for development and full use of local sources of savings. Political and social obstacles to their creative use may have to be overcome. Foreign loans or grants will almost certainly also be needed, and this requires a social and political climate which will make proper use of foreign aid, in the form of inter-governmental loans and private investment, provided the investors also approach the problem from the world-wide point of view and do not attach political strings to such aid.

In this connection it is extremely important that social capital be developed as fully as possible at the earliest stage of industrial development, so that housing for the suddenly increased number of workers, health services, education and

other welfare services may be expanded at the same time as industry is developed.

All these developments raise important questions for the churches : Is the Church aware of what is happening in the field of industrialization ? What are the particular fields in which industrialization is required ? How far is industry being developed for nationalistic and political reasons ? Are people aware of the need for saving ? Are savings being properly used, or are people hoarding money ? Are the rich living luxuriously and contributing little to economic development ? On what conditions will countries welcome foreign capital or loans ? Is housing of workers neglected ? What cultural factors hinder sound industrial development ? Should the churches be contributing to the growth of a dynamic spirit in economic life ?

Men in Industry

Industrialization, especially in areas which have been hitherto predominantly agrarian or otherwise technologically underdeveloped, must be accompanied by plans for the adaptation of the masses of unskilled workers to the new conditions. Particularly important in many countries is the training of skilled workers. But such training involves a proper attitude toward "work" on the part of workers, and Christians have an important responsibility to stress the Christian concept of the dignity of work.

One of the characteristics of the industrialized society is the mobility of workers, both horizontal and vertical, which produces great human problems and dangers, as well as great new opportunities. The dangers to the family need to be clearly recognized here. But the workers must not be arbitrarily tied down to any particular job or area of work, and need to be freed from the bondage and semi-slavery which exist in some parts of the world. Every worker must be encouraged to train himself to the maximum of his potentiality, without discrimination as to race, colour, sex or religion, so that he can make his greatest contribution to his fellow men through his occupation.

When a tremendously large number of workers is involved in technologically developed industry and tends to be reduced to the anonymity of the masses, they need to protect their interests and develop their solidarity as a group, in trade unions and other groups. This need, which is both social and spiritual, psychological and moral, must be fully recognized by Christians,

and the Church should lend its resources to help develop such solidarity among workers, and should seek to have it governed by the principles of justice and love rooted in the Christian concept of man. Christians need to assert strongly the rights of all workers to combine in free trade unions.

By the same token, Christians must help to ensure that social legislation to protect workers is enacted and kept up to date. This entails both political action and social education by which to sharpen the social consciousness of the general body of citizens. These tasks must be accepted by the Church as part of its "regular" ministry in an industrialized society. Pertinent questions for study in this connection are : How can Christians show their concern with the problems of workers ? Is the Church finding new ways of ministering to workers especially in their places of work ? What are the special problems of women and youth with which the Church must be concerned ? What is the Christian meaning of work ? What is the special role of trade unions in an area where industry is expanding rapidly ? How can Christians help trade unions to fulfil their responsibilities to their members and to the whole society ? For what social ills is social legislation urgently needed ? What can Christians do to encourage legislative action ?

Urbanization

One of the most characteristic features of the areas of rapid social change has been the tremendously rapid growth of cities. This has come about for a variety of reasons, such as the growth of industry, overpopulation on the land, the need for money to pay taxes, and the higher standard of living in cities. The movement to the cities has meant a tremendous uprooting of human beings, who are thrown into an entirely new environment and subjected to powerful new forces.

People come into the cities and large towns for varying periods. Some come to settle permanently. Some live a part of the year in the city and a part in the village. Others come for a number of years to earn bride-wealth, and then return to the village. The city cannot be understood except against the rural background. Particular problems arise in all these different cases, and need different treatment. Those who spend a part of the year in the city may maintain continued contacts with their village community, whereas those settling in the

city for several years may have broken all ties with the life of the village and yet do not settle permanently in the city.

In all cases there are problems of settlement, adaptation and protection of people. These problems are the more acute because men come into cities from many varied social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The new or transient city-dweller has his roots in two cultures, and may be at home in neither. Men have to face new social forces. They are subjected to the full force of a money economy. They may face poverty and desperately inadequate housing conditions. They may be terribly lonely and isolated. They face temptations of organized prostitution and vice. New forms of amusement, new eating habits, new leisure patterns are forced on them. Their family life is disintegrated, if not destroyed. In many new urban areas, the proportion of men is far above that of women. Where women come to the city, they may also work, and the children may be neglected during the day. All these social and psychological pressures often arise against a background of unsanitary, unhygienic conditions, where overcrowding and disease are rampant. These are problems which the Church has to understand and in view of which Christians must seek to meet human need.

Organization of City Life

Wherever possible, the uncontrolled growth and expansion of the city must be avoided. It must be replaced by carefully worked-out city planning and control, both of the establishment of new industry and expansion of existing industry and of housing for the growing population, as well as the redevelopment of old congested areas. Christians as citizens must find ways and means to participate in making plans for urban development and in carrying them out. This means, in the first place, that Christians who are experts in these fields should bring Christian insights into such city planning and at the same time help their fellow Christians grasp the technical problems involved. In the second place, Christians must play their role in implementing such plans as a part of their civic responsibility.

As important as city planning, is social legislation and an expanding welfare work to care for the needs of the masses living in the modern city, suffering from all sorts of tensions, stresses and strains, and to help the old, the weak, the disabled and the unemployed. There is in these new urban areas a

need for all kinds of social welfare agencies, employing competent social workers. At the same time those services which are available can be made more accessible to people who are in need. Christian ministers have many opportunities to help people to make use of the established agencies. The Church may also be required sometimes to create new agencies of its own, to care for unmet needs. The role of voluntary social work in relation to state social services is an important subject for study in areas of rapid social change. All this means that the Christian must be both directly and indirectly concerned with local government and administration, and take an active part in them where possible. This is an important area of responsible citizenship too often neglected.

Community in the City

Large numbers of unskilled workers, who migrate into the city and who have been uprooted from the age-old cultural heritage embodied in their old village, are without material or spiritual resources. Of primary importance to them is the development of new community groupings, which the Church must accept as one of the most important aspects of its ministry in the modern city.

To help develop a creative community within the structure of the modern city, the Church needs to take advantage of the existing natural associations, such as burial societies, collective savings groups, tribal unions and other semi-traditional organizations, and to build communities around them. At the same time, the Church (parish) must make every effort to become a community which transcends all ethnic, cultural, occupational, and any other kind of grouping. This task of the Church to become a vital community within the modern city requires all the energy which the Church can muster.

Fragmentation of man's life is another characteristic of modern city life, and it occurs in many different ways. One of them is the separation of work places from the places where men live. Frequently the place where men live is little more than a place to sleep, and it may be exceedingly difficult for the Church to make any real contact with the workers there. In such a situation, the Church must find a way to minister to the workers at their place of work, where they may develop a genuine community sense and can therefore more readily develop as human beings. The ministry to workers

at their work may require special skills hitherto undeveloped on the part of the clergy. In this respect it seems to be of the utmost importance for the Church to approach this task on an ecumenical, and not on a parochial or denominational, basis. Imaginative experiments are required to meet the new moral situations.

While the workers may receive the Church's ministry at their place of work, their wives must be ministered to where they live. The wives of workers who are new to city life may suffer especially from a sense of uselessness, futility and helplessness, and this aggravates the problem of spiritual and social adjustment of the worker to life in the industrial city. The Church must begin to organize itself to grapple with the gigantic task of helping families in the new circumstances of city life.

The Christian fellowhip within the framework of the local parish might express itself in various ways beyond the limits of the parish, for example, in groups working in the same occupation or place. Fellowships of Christian traders, lorry drivers, teachers or other workers, transcending parochial and denominational lines, can strengthen Christian individuals so that they can become effective witnesses to the Gospel in and through their occupations. Similarly, such fellowships can strengthen workers in factories in such a way that in their respective unions they become effective witnesses to the Gospel as union members.

In all these ways, it may be possible for the city to become a place where men and women can worship God as naturally as in the country. Christians must ask : What are the major social and human problems of city life ? What resources are available for dealing with them ? How can the Church and the individual Christian express their concern for man in the new urban centres ? To what extent can Christians do this by strengthening local government in voluntary social work ? What does it mean for the Church to be a "real community" in the urban situation ? In view of the ethnic multiplicity of the many urban areas in Asia and Africa Christians must ask : Does the congregation include members from the various ethnic or cultural groups ? In view of the disintegrating forces in the city, how far can the Church make use of existing social groups in working for community development ? What is the desirability of, and what are the dangers in, developing associations of Christians in different occupations ?

Industrialization is the necessary means of elevating people's standards of living. The Gospel most positively recognizes the value of material things, but always as a means to serve man, and never as ends in themselves. It must be remembered that material improvement alone does not guarantee "abundance of life" as understood in the Gospel.

The modern city, which is a product of modern technology, offers to man many new opportunities as well as dangers and pitfalls. The moral degradation of city life has received too one-side an emphasis in the past. The modern city can provide not only all sorts of professional and skilled services, which, if adequately used, would more than counteract the evils which are found in it; it can also provide a higher standard of life, new forms of community spirit, a give-and-take between different groups, and many other cultural and social opportunities for development.

Church leaders must be constantly alert to what is happening in society, equipped with accurate knowledge of the problems confronting men living in it, and versed in the proper skills to enable them to deal with these problems intelligently. In modern industrialized and urban society, the ministry will have to adapt itself to the many phases of a constantly changing situation. What type of program, what sort of activity or what kinds of service may be most acutely needed or most relevant must be determined by the churches in the given area by as objective and comprehensive a study as possible.

The Church must also train both clergy and laity along new lines, if they are to fulfil their responsibilities as Christians in their society.

The Church at this moment of history needs to recognize that its social ministry is a corporate ministry in which both clergy and laity share equally. Christians who are experts in various specialized fields have a responsibility to make their knowledge and skill available to the Church as it ministers to man in society. The Church has not been making full use of the skills available in its membership.

The churches need seriously to reconsider their programs of selection and training of ministers, missionaries and other professional church workers. An Asian church leader has pointed out the need for reform of theological training to make it more relevant to the circumstances of rapidly growing industrial

urban centres. "Our churches in South-East Asia have been rurally oriented... but we are destined to become increasingly urban, dependent on machines, techniques and education. The Church ought to develop a ministry to labour... In too many places the labouring groups are untouched by the Church's ministry... much of our liturgy and sermonizing appear irrelevant to men who earn their living by sweating over machines, or by driving a bicycle cab. Our ministry must be acquainted with the challenge of trade unions and Marxist political parties. We must develop programs and services which are calculated to speak to the newly-emerging working classes in Asian society. We must also find ways of reaching people who live concentrated in cities, who have little or no sense of community."

Do churches realize the urgent need for reform in the training of the ministry ? What are the essential components of theological education relevant to areas of rapid social change ? What steps can be taken now to train the laity to fulfil their functions as representatives of the Church in the world ? It is clear that, in the future training of the clergy and the laity, more attention must be given to the study of the social forces at work in communities undergoing rapid social change.

V. Responsible Citizenship

The Development of Political Institutions

The existing situations

Christians in areas of social change need to be clear in their thinking about the form of political organizations or institutions for which they must work, in order that they may participate as responsible citizens in the political order. But to be effective in whatever they do, they must also take seriously existing conditions in the context of which they will make their political decisions.

These conditions are not uniform in the various countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The processes of rapid social change in these areas have brought about various sets of political conditions. There are nations which have adopted parliamentary or democratic institutions of the Western type, but which in practice have not been able to establish order, or to overcome a paralyzing corruption in public life. Some peoples have achieved independence as nations, and with much success are using their inherited political institutions for coping with the complex problems of political order and social justice; they are, we must note, still trying to realize a stable political structure by adapting their institutions to the needs of independent and responsible nationhood. There are nations which have accepted an authoritarian regime in the hope of realizing thereby a new order of political freedom. There are more or less benevolent paternalisms. There are also regimes in the control of imperialist powers: in some of these foreign control is making itself dispensable, and not in others; in some of these economic control is to remain after the political control is relinquished. There are communist regimes. And there are states in which a racial minority excludes from power and responsibility the great majority of the people, and where the latter are taxed without political representation.

Criteria for political institutions

While it is the responsibility of Christians to serve their community in the existing situation, no matter how unfavourable political conditions may be, they should always use every

opportunity to work for political institutions and structures which are more favourable to the welfare, including the freedom, of the people. Christians, who understand that the state is limited by the divine sovereignty, should work for the general recognition by society that the state is not the ultimate source of morality and law and that it should by its very nature be limited in its authority. They should work for institutions which have at least the following characteristics :

(a) the capacity of the organs of government to govern, to maintain order and to act with power and decision in coping with the problems of social and economic changes ;

(b) responsiveness to the real needs of all sections of the population (see the paragraph on "The Role of the State in Economic Life" and the section on "Industrialization);

(c) opportunity for the people as a whole to participate in political life ;

(d) provision for discussion of public policies, for criticism of government, for the development of a responsible "opposition" which can displace those in power by orderly processes ;

(e) constitutional protection of wide areas of personal freedom, freedom from arbitrary action by the state, freedom for the expression of religious, moral and political convictions.

Political institutions of the kind outlined here depend for their existence and proper functioning upon moral and spiritual conditions in the national culture. The following are some of the most important conditions :

(a) widespread loyalty among the people to the good of society as a whole, with emphasis on devotion to duties as well as rights ;

(b) a substantial agreement on ultimate political objectives, so that the necessary and often creative political conflicts do not become the occasion of civil war or paralyzing stalemates ;

(c) a widely felt sense of justice ;

(d) the training of public servants of integrity ;

(e) an atmosphere that is open to change and criticism.

The Church as Church makes its most profund contribution to political life on this level, but this contribution should be accompanied by the encouragement of Christians to take direct political action in the existing situation, where this is possible. The fact must be faced that some churches live under regimes which leave no room now for such direct political action by Christians. Other churches are in countries which lack the kind of tradition and experience which seem necessary for the development of political institutions which meet to any degree some of the criteria emphasized here. Each church in its own situation must discover the best way of witnessing to God's purpose for freedom and justice in society.

Some questions which need study are : Can a democratic state promote national development with sufficient rapidity ? Can it establish and maintain order ? If in any situations the answer to either of these questions is "no", what are the alternatives which do not lead toward dictatorship or an oligarchy with exclusive authority ? Can the interests of the people as a whole in any country be sufficiently represented without universal suffrage ? Are there tests for this suffrage which are usually desirable ? How can the development of leaders who are indispensable to democracy and who may tend to become a kind of "elite" be harmonized with the democratic tendencies which many of these countries accept ? How far is political "corruption" a consequence of aspects of the culture, especially the family, caste and communal system ? How can inherited institutions be transformed to meet contemporary needs ? What are the values in the indigenous cultures which should be preserved in spite of rapid social change ? How can we have greater equality in public life without destroying initiative and without creating pressure toward uniformity ? How can democratic tendencies be so guided that they do not lead to the tyranny of the majority or of demagogic leaders who control the majority ?

Forms of Political Participation

Christian citizenship demands active participation in those organizations and institutions which determine the development of the local community and the nation — family, work, professional societies and community organizations as well as political movements. However, in most areas of rapid social change

politics is the sphere in which the witness of the Christian citizen becomes most urgent and necessary. The rapid changes of recent decades have upset the equilibrium of older societies, opening up both new possibilities of exploitation and chaos and new opportunities for freedom and justice in the social order. It is primarily in the political sphere that the choice between these alternatives is being determined.

Much attention must be given to the forms of participation in political life which are most appropriate for Christians. Christians should act as forgiven sinners in the world as it is, a world in which political power is necessary for the preservation and improvement of society and in which the only available political alternatives and movements are morally mixed. To wait until ideal political possibilities are available before one acts is illusionary and morally irresponsible. It is also clear that churches should encourage the formation of groups to study and discuss political issues and to prepare their members to take part in various political parties. In most situations it is desirable for Christians to enter secular political parties. In some situations it may be desirable for the Christians who belong to a particular political party to meet together as Christians and to help one another deal with the issues which arise from their membership in the same party. One of the most debated questions in some countries is that of the desirability of the formation of Christian political parties. Some Christians are convinced that Christian parties are necessary forms of Christian witness in politics. Others consider that such parties may be justified in certain circumstances and as a temporary measure. Still others are equally convinced that the organization of Christian parties is un-Christian. This is a problem which needs further careful study. However, in all situations it should be emphasized that there is no one Christian political organization, and that there is no one form of "Christian politics". The Church as Church must never become identified with a political party, though there may be occasions when the Church as Church should oppose a particular party, for example, a party that is committed to anti-Semitism or any other form of racial politics. However, the Church should be careful to judge political parties in terms of their total programs and of what they mean to the nation as a whole, and not chiefly in terms of the relation of a party to its own institutional interests or to the political interests of Christians as a distinctive community.

All too often the role of the state in economic life has been discussed in terms of *a priori* theories, and without adequate consideration of the actual situation in a particular country. There can be no doubt that the state has an important part to play in the economic development of areas of rapid social change. No other body can keep the whole situation under review, make the facts available, and see the weak spots where forces need to be concentrated. Balanced economic and social development requires an overall plan, within which particular operations can be undertaken by a variety of agencies. The state will have to undertake some, because no other bodies will be able to do them. Of particular importance in this respect are education, town planning, and basic services such as means of transportation, irrigation schemes, agricultural extension, and such large economic schemes as hydro-electric power development. Beyond these essential fields, much will depend on the availability of domestic enterprise, its development in the right directions, and the quality of governmental and administrative ability. It may be that, in countries where there is not an adequate supply of enterprise, the state will have to train people to undertake these operations, and to fill the gaps which private enterprise refuses to enter. In other cases, there may be a danger that unwise state action may dry up the sources of enterprise, and set back economic development. Areas of rapid social change are often, if not predominantly, areas where indigenous managerial and entrepreneurial ability are scarce, and yet economic and social development largely depends on the right use of these scarce abilities. Whatever the social and political ideals in relation to private enterprise and state action, this has to be borne in mind.

Some of the questions that arise in this respect are as follows : Has the government any overall idea of the development of the country, or does it merely plan a haphazard series of projects, as political forces put pressure on it ? How efficient is the government machine, and what are the fields in which it is competent to act responsibly and efficiently ? Does the government undertake any responsibility for the housing of the people and town planning ? Does the government engage in industry and large economic projects because of abstract theories, or because it alone can undertake these projects ? Is there sufficient managerial and entrepreneurial ability in your country ? Does

the government do anything to train it ? Is private enterprise engaging in the fields where development is required ? Is the government doing anything to fill any necessary gaps ? Or is it throttling healthy private developments for political reasons ? What are the churches doing to make people see the problem as a whole ? Are the churches doing what they can to train people for responsible enterprise in the economic field ? Are Christians as much concerned with ideological battles about slogan-words as are others ?

Religion and the State

The relation between religion and state is an important issue in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In some the state by constitution is linked with the dominant religion of the country. In countries where the state at present recognizes the plurality of religions and accepts the ideal of neutrality as between them, there are parties and forces working for a special place in the structure of the state, for the religion of the majority and the adherents of that religion. The establishment today of theocracy, that is, of a state which is officially exclusively Islamic, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or animistic, is inimical to the right of religious freedom and the principle of equality of all citizens under law. And often in these areas of rapid social change a theocratic ideology is also linked with oppressive structures and customs of society which are a hindrance to social development. It is the duty of Christians, in cooperation with other citizens, to seek to build a neutral state, that is, a state in which these dangers are avoided and in which people irrespective of their religious beliefs have freedom of conscience and equal opportunity to make their contribution to state and society.

The issue appears in different forms in the different national situations. Many questions need study. For instance, in some situations, a neutral state is defined as separation of state and political parties from all religions, and in some others as the state's equal concern for all religions. Which pattern is more creative ? Should the state as state acknowledge its responsibility to God or should it acknowledge the facts of its citizens' responsibility to God ? How shall the state express its concern for the religious and moral welfare of the people ? What is

the meaning and content of religious freedom ? Should Christians work also for religious freedom as a human right including the freedom of anti-religious propaganda ? What is the Christian evaluation of the role of secularism in the struggle for a neutral state ? What are the dangers in a neutral state about which the Church is to be vigilant ? How can we prevent the neutral state being interpreted in terms of dogmas of secularism or of the equality of religions ? How shall the Church act under a theocratic state or in the face of strong religious communal parties working for one ? In countries fighting for national freedom, what is the Christian role when the national movements have anti-Christian religious motivation ?

The Role of the Nation

It is the fact that the course of social change has led and is leading peoples in these areas to a sense of nationhood. This fact makes it necessary for them to come to a proper understanding of the meaning of nationalism. It is easy for nationalism to turn into an excessive form of group egoism, which by its hidden and powerful impulses and emotions can become a force of oppression. The distinction between healthy nationalism and chauvinism is a subject for further thinking.

There are two aspects of nationalism in these areas which must be appreciated :

Nationalism and nationhood

(a) A sense of national pride has been a creative impulse in areas of rapid social change. It has moved people to work for the political autonomy which is one of the necessary conditions of responsible political order.

(b) A sense of national identity has created a sense of human solidarity and community which are richer than the tribal and clan societies which it superseded. The creation of nationhood in this sense has been, and is, part of the mission of nationalism.

(c) National loyalty has provided an impulse for national development both by the accompanying spirit of service and by the spirit of community self-help.

Nationalism and other loyalties

Political responsibility in the newly-independent nations is increasingly becoming involved with decisions involving the welfare of other nations. It is partly in the exercise of a just and humane foreign policy that some of the excesses of nationalism are restrained. The Church which by its nature has an ecumenical character has the duty of leading its people to an understanding of what the role of a nation is in every time and place. The rapidly growing interdependence of the world makes it imperative for Christians to think and work in terms of an emerging world community.

Training for Citizenship

An urgent task of the Church, in areas of rapid social change and elsewhere, is the training of people in responsible citizenship by inculcating in them the following attitudes of mind : devotion to such civic virtues as honesty in elections, the realization that political parties should not be self-seeking factions, as deep a concern for public causes after elections as before, consideration of the rights and feelings of others, an unfaltering devotion to the practice of justice and fair play, and the maintenance of high standards of integrity in public life, the proper balance between family, provincial and communal loyalties and national and international loyalties, the reconciliation of the claims of nationality with the claims of humanity, the recognition of the "duty" and "right" to resist the state in extreme cases when everything fails, and training in the utilization of peaceful and non-violent methods in securing the desired ends in such resistance. We must ask, to what extent the Church through its many institutions is serving as a training ground for democracy.

VI. Conclusion

In this report on issues of rapid social change in Asia, Africa and Latin America questions have been listed and topics for further study have been singled out. However, it would be wrong to conclude that these topics can be studied in separation from each other. On the contrary, we want to affirm that the underlying change taking place is one fundamental process of emancipation with many different facets. Therefore any one of the four areas of concern discussed above needs to be studied in relation to the others. Also in dealing with any and all of these problems Christians should guard against the tendency to separate social and political questions from moral and spiritual concerns.

Questions of the "spirit" cannot be separated from questions of the "body". In areas of rapid social change, as in all societies, *both* the environment *and* the attitudes are changing. Therefore, people must make decisions and take action in terms of the unity of spirit and body. Questions of individual ethics, of family, of the goals of economic life, of human rights, and of international cooperation can never be answered in isolation from each other.

For the same reason we must also oppose all benevolent paternalism within the Church which takes the attitude, "we want better schools, we want better agriculture, but no politics please". We must also challenge churches that believe you can make better believers and leave their social environment untouched.

Another common obstacle to Christian action in society is the bewilderment of Christians who confront for the first time the multiplicity and the complexity of the problems of rapid social change. Sometimes this spiritual bewilderment leads Christians to a negative attitude toward all change. Sometimes it results in an apocalyptic dramatisation of hopes and fears. Christians can guard against such bewilderment by a deepening of their faith. As followers of the One Who said, "Behold I will make all things new", we must demonstrate in our thought and action that new life in men and their societies is a part of God's purpose for the world and that our task of social witness, service and redemptive action is never finished but will continue "until He come".

Library & Archives
World Council of Churches
150 Route de Ferney
CH-1211 Geneva 2
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THE main objective of this social change study is to encourage the expression of local and national Christian opinion on the above questions and to promote conversations, and wherever possible community action, between Christian groups on the Christian witness and strategy in this field. We welcome the participation of all groups and churches and ask them to share with us their convictions.

FOR further information address :

The Department on Church and Society

Division of Studies
World Council of Churches
17 route de Malagnou
Geneva, Switzerland.

Imprimerie La Concorde, Lausanne (Suisse). 1800/56

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